Research Paper Proposal

Background
Since first proposed by CCPC in 2004, a new concept—“Building of a Harmonious Society” has gained more and more attention in China. The society in China now is seen to be generally harmonious. However, from my perspective based on personal working experience, I do see some disharmonies happening occasionally, which reflect in various gaps in development, between regions, between urban and rural areas, and between other social areas. These increasing gaps are the most urgent problems Chinese government need to solve. Governments of all levels in China emphasize more on improving their administration ability and innovating traditional ways of management, and place “building a harmonious society” top on their work agenda. Meanwhile, discussions on how to build up such a society have been carried out nationwide. A harmonious society will feature democracy, the rule of law, equity, justice, sincerity, amity and vitality. Such a society will give full scope to people's talent and creativity, enable all the people to share the social wealth brought by reform and development, and forge an ever closer relationship between the people and government. These things will result in lasting stability and unity. However, it's a challenging, long-lasting procedure, not a one-step project.

Topic of research
Since I have work for local government for near 10 years, I have witnessed the amazing metamorphoses took place in the society as a whole, especially in sub-urban areas where both local governments and residents are experiencing marvelous development accompanying with complicated conflicts. To take Xiamen Municipality, one of the four Special Economic Zones in China, as object for this research, I would like to focus on the conflict between local government and villagers as symptoms of an emerging pattern of rural unrest that challenges the very legitimacy of the Chinese state and the development path on which it has embarked.
Xiamen - a booming regional hub of foreign direct investment, with thousands of new factories of global as well as domestic corporations - embodies these conflicts and inequalities more intensely. Unlike the situation before, it is surprising that, since recent years, the municipality
have been confronting development bottleneck due to conflicts originating from peasants’ resistance to surrender their lands for urban and industries purposes. According to the land property laws, all lands belong to the country on behave of the people, the collectives of certain communities. When local governments make efforts to re-plan and requisition rural lands for new industries and infrastructure development, peasants are losing their land to highways, factories and housing projects for wealthy city-dwellers escaping urban pollution and small apartments. At the same time, compensation for land requisitions is undervalued and minimal that far less than what is needed for their transformation and sustaining development. Some peasants worry their loss of lands that used to be seen as minimal subsistence base by most of peasants in China, would lead to insufficient to feed their families in the future, thus forcing many households to join the millions of migrants in search of work across the country. Another factor that worsens the situation is unsound social security coverage in rural society where collective welfare mechanisms no longer exist because of post-Mao reforms. Under such circumstances, combined with other stimulations like mal-management or unsound policies of local governments, some local residents even take desperate, extreme, unilateral approaches to the conflicts after years of petitions and peaceful protests had failed to relieve them promised compensation for their confiscated lands. There has been great development in rural China in the past decades. However, a new trend is also emerging that some peasants and rural workers have seen the state increasingly side with the newly rich over the past two decades, and tend to deduce themselves as victims of others’ prosperity.

The conflict dilemma confronting Xiamen Municipal Government is not a public relations one, nor is it about how to cope with some particular sets of conflict events. In this research, I hope to address the structural roots of the rural unrest — political, environmental, social and economic. The good news is the state is opting to adopt a systematic attempt to build a harmonious society, whose foundation characterizes as rural stability and prosperity.